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Rate, 1/- per line per insertion. Minimum 4 lines, 4/- (average 7 words to a line).
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No. 4. Vol. 1. January 24th, 1921

Movie Land

THE BRITISH CINEMA WEEKLY DE LUXE.

Editor: MRS. HELEN SEVREZ.
EDITORIAL OFFICES: 4/6 ST. ANN'S CHAMBERS, BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON, E.C.4.
TELEGRAMS: CHAPINSURA, CENT. LONDON. TELEPHONE: CENTRAL 9620

The Editor will be pleased to consider MSS., 1,000—1,500 words in length, on film, theatrical and dancing topics. MSS. must be exclusive and original, preferably accompanied by photographs, and stamped and addressed envelope for return in case of unsuitability. While the Editor will make every effort to ensure the safe return of rejected MSS., no responsibility will be accepted for their loss.

"PROPAGANDA" FILMS.

Why is there such an outcry against "propaganda" films whenever a picture dealing with one or another of the outstanding problems of our day is "trade shown" by some enterprising producer? The word "propaganda," according to its dictionary meaning, is not the insidious agent of evil that its consistent misuse would imply. Propaganda is not necessarily a menace to freedom of thought!

* * *

If ever I saw a film startlingly propagandist, in the finest sense, from start to finish, it was the great French epic, "J'Accuse"—the magnificent achievement of that inspired producer, Monsieur Abel Gance. The most ardent pacifist could have wished for no more convincing "propaganda" than this!

* * *

It was funny to see the critics who had committed themselves in glaring headlines to "The Dangers of Film Propaganda" toppling hastily off their perch to assure the picture-going public that although this film-epic was "a play to end war," it was in no sense a propagandist play! It was much the same story when "Unmarried"—the fine Granger production depicting the tragedy of the unmarried mother and her child—was "trade shown." Perhaps it was because it enlisted the sympathy of so many big publicists that some of the critics sounded the alarm. At all events, the wiseacres wagged their heads, and the auditorium resounded to the dread echo of "Propaganda." Apparently because a picture which, for the sake of Gerald Du Maurier's performance alone was something to thank the fates for, had presented stark reality instead of smug illusion.

* * *

"Build thy House," a Capital and Labour picture-play, was shown to a similar accompaniment of "propaganda" murmurs. "The Skin Game" will probably escape—because Mr. Galsworthy is—Mr. Galsworthy; and in the matter of propaganda, you never know where you've got him.

* * *

But it is obviously a harassing business, this question of where problems merge into hydra-headed, liberty-filching propaganda! All real hard thought, of course, is dangerous. It is only *ill*usion that is safe.

RUTH ROLAND.

The Pathé "Star," whose latest success is in the new Pathé serial, "The Adventures of Ruth."

ROUND ABOUT MOVIE-LAND.

Leaves from a Picture-goer's Notebook.

THERE is a great deal of humbug being talked just now about British *versus* American films. Yes, it has come to that. And those responsible for this fatuous "British *versus* American" campaign are working definitely against the best interests of British producers by obscuring the main issue—from the picture-goers' point of view.

For it is certainly not in the best interests of British producers, still less of the picture-going public, to hail all British picture-plays as great works of art, and all American productions as "junk." And this appears to be the attitude of what I may call the "American slump" school of so-called film criticism. This sort of thing is not criticism; it is wilfully purblind prejudice. The plain fact is—and any unprejudiced British picture goer will endorse it—that many British productions have been as bad as the worst American; while many American productions (even before the new lease of film life, with its considerably more ambitious ideals, set in across the Pond) have been as good, and sometimes immeasurably better than the very best British achievements.

Abortive Prejudice.

It is surely high time that all this mud-throwing came to an end, and that films were judged by capable critics on their merits only, without first looking at their label of origin. Critics who pour the butter-boat of indiscriminate flattery over British producers are doing them no kindness. They are simply setting back the clock of progress and making competition harder for those whom they pretend to help.

Britishers are very naturally well disposed to good British films, and enthusiastic picture-goers are as anxious for them to take their place in the sun as the critics who are pushing them out of it by fulsome flattery of mediocrity. But this quite nice patriotic feeling does not blind the patrons of the "movies" to the merits of foreign pictures, whether American, French, Italian, or (whisper it low!) even German. Picture-goers pay their money and expect, more and more, to be able to take their choice of the very best the world's film market has to offer. Renters and exhibitors have long since accepted this as fact. I imagine they read some of those marvellous film criticisms with their tongues in their cheeks. They are well aware that they cannot rely on "all-British" programmes, but must give a place to the first-rate foreign competitor; that in this great new world of art, as in all others, it is the art that counts, not the birthplace.

A Fighting Chance.

Not so long ago it was necessary to boom the slogan: "British Films for British People," because British films had fallen into such disrepute that they stood no chance against expert foreign competition, notably, of course, American. And as usual, in propagandist activities, interested parties erred on the side of exaggeration. Now that British producers have proved that, at their best, they can take their place in the front rank of world-producers, they ought to be above this "special pleading" stunt. They should now be prepared to take a fighting chance. They can keep the place they have won by achievement, not mere asseveration; by Art, not by blatent appeals to so-called "patriotism." Having proved what they can do, they must be prepared to face competition in a sportsmanlike fashion, not make themselves ridiculous—or allow the "critics" to do it—by firing vindictive insults at people to whom, in earlier days, they were glad to go for advice. They have nothing to fear if they give us of their best. And the keener the competition the better for their work—and for picture-goers, who ultimately, be it remembered, must decide their fate. I know, of course, that there are two or three outstanding British producers who welcome a fight worthy of their steel. These are the men who smile in their beards at this childish anti-American campaign; who know that the cause of "British Films for British People" will gain nothing by this insane attitude, in certain quarters, towards American films—simply because they are American.

The Bright Side.

Most pictures, however, have their bright side. And the system strictly stimulated enthusiasm for British pictures has had one excellent result. The pernicious block-booking system has been vigorously assailed; some of our most inspired exhibitors have been courageous enough to pay big money for really first-class home productions instead of buying up, months

and years in advance as in the bad old days, fifth-rate films thrown at them for a mere song. All of which strengthens my case; to wit, that the best British pictures need fear no rival.

America is not slow to read the writing on the wall. The recent scrapping of " dud " films proves that she, at all events, recognises in the new type of British producer an equal competitor, a foeman worthy of her finest steel. The film stage is set for action. And the best man will take the curtain, whatever his nationality. Because the great picture-going public isn't such a fool as it is sometimes painted. On the other hand, it could teach some of the critics quite a lot. Not to mention some of the producers. They should hear Tom, Dick and Harry chortling over some of those ineffable sub-titles. As I heard a picture-goer remark the other day, "I love the movies because the tap of unconscious humour never runs dry." Incidentally, I have never been able to understand why the normal evolution of the film should be retarded by gross illiteracy in practically every department of its " literary " activities. It will be a fine day for the movies when we have real film editors who know their business and have an inherent respect for the King's English.

MISS PHYLLIS MONKMAN
Who is giving such a delightful performance in " A Night Out."

Just--Feet!

(*By a Mere Picture-goer*).

MANY a girl who, after making her blushing *début* in film-land, goes nervously to the "trade show" to see herself as others see her, must be a prey to some disconcerting thoughts after a first experience of the kind.

The film is notoriously a discoverer of natural talent; exercises an unerring discrimination between beauty of feature and mere prettiness; and is said to project personality, more than either of these assets, from the silver screen.

There is one other thing, however, that it emphasises tremendously—sometimes brutally.

Feet!

Many a foot that in private life passes muster as a shapely enough limb appears with unflinching crudity on the screen as a horrible piece of human utility. It is all too plainly a thing to walk with; doubtless a useful base on which to stand. But no; not a thing of blatant beauty. The actress whose feet appear on the "movies" as they do in her imagination in real life is indeed a fortunate person. You cannot hide them behind chairs. You cannot always be sitting with them tucked under tables. There are no friendly footlights behind which to fold them. The camera will always find them, and proclaim in almost audible flickers . . . " Just look at those feet! CO-LOSSAL! "

I am sure there must be some hundreds of lesser actresses who have been tempted to throw up the film and to retire into less exacting professions by the mere sight of their own feet elongated and exaggerated as in the distorting mirrors familiar to everyone who has paid his sixpence at a country fair. Few feet, admittedly, are really things of undeniable beauty; but they become secondary considerations when their owner is vivacious, or a brilliant mistress of dialogue. One can conceal one's feet with wit or sparkling repartee—in real life. On the screen—no!

The audience sits below the level of the screen, and from its comfortably padded seats, and with its mouth full of those large sticky sweets that so enhance the fine careless rapture of the movie enthusiast, it gazes ever upward at the artists projected on that enormous expanse of white.

And as it looks up, the first thing it sees is—FEET.

Even a small foot seems no longer fairy-like when viewed like this; but the foot which bashfully admits to a five and a half or, under pressure, to a six, in the intimate atmosphere of the shoe salon, appears to the movie audience to be of grotesque and mirthful proportions.

Any cinema actress can bear the sight of her face unfamiliarly contorted in rage or mirth; she may even observe without deep emotion, the unintentional and often futile movements of her hands. But if she can contemplate without panic the prospect of thousands of picture-goers all over the country passing ribald comments on her poor feet, she probably has the potentialities of the really great artist.

What every Woman knows—

But, alas! does not always act upon. Ill-fitting shoes spell sartorial disaster. Every woman knows this to be so; and yet she does not devote anything like the time to the choice of proper footwear that she does to her dresses and other "big" items of her wardrobe. Most women confess to an inherent dread of buying new shoes. But if the well-dressed woman, who realises that footwear is in every sense the starting point of sartorial success, would insist upon seeing the last on which her shoes are made, the trying-on process she has learnt to dread would become a real pleasure.

An Anatomical Shoe Last

The last that is made with a scrupulous regard for the proper shape of the human foot, ensuring correct tread, perfect comfort, and beauty of carriage, is used as the foundation for the "Baber" footwear. The result is elegance combined with ease. That part of the foot which needs support is the instep. The "Baber" last gives this support, at the same time accentuating the arch and giving that "dancer's foot" appearance which is the envy of slender-footed women, many of whom fear they are suffering from flat foot, when the only trouble is ill-fitting and badly constructed footwear. Shoes made on the "Baber" last dispense with the necessity for heavy artificial "arches."

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(*Photograph—Hugh Cecil*)

Note the *arch* of the foot supported by the "Baber" type of shoe. Made in all styles.

MONSIEUR ABEL GANCE.

MASTERS OF MOVIES: MONS. ABEL GANCE.

MONS. ABEL GANCE, the young Frenchman who created so much comment with his provocative picture "J'Accuse," is something more than a clever producer with a capacity for effective photography. By nature a visionary he takes the bare skeleton of a theme and develops it, unravelling the threads of some great idea throughout the sequence of scenic effects and incident. "J'Accuse" was as great a triumph for M. Gance, the screen dramatist, as for M. Gance, the producer.

* * *

Early Days.

Now thirty years of age, M. Gance was born in Paris. He soon left his home however, running away from an atmosphere unsympathetic to literary and dramatic ambition, to earn a living in Brussels, first as an actor and later in cinema work. He always wanted to write plays, and the first step in that direction was to obtain work actually in the theatre. Never, however, was the dramatic ambition more than quiescent, and in his spare time he was continually working on the perfection of technique and the development of ideas.

One might compare his early life with that of the great tragedian, Sir Henry Irving, who, fired with the determination to make a name in drama, never missed an evening at the "City Elocution Class" while still a counting house clerk in an East India merchant's office in Newgate Street. It was a similar determination that kept alive M. Gance's genius through the two years spent as an actor in Brussels. During this period he did in fact have a couple of political plays produced.

Leaving the theatre behind him he then spent two years in the study of philosophy, earning a living at the same time in cinema work. These two years had a great bearing on his ultimate success as a producer of films. He learnt in the studio the technique of photography without which to attempt direction must prove almost impossible, while his study of philosophy did much to develop both imagination and clarity of vision.

* * *

Méthode Directe!

It very soon became plain that he possessed unusual ability, a rare appreciation of dramatic values, and an almost brutal directness of method that marked him as a producer with an individuality.

He always had ideas of his own on the subject of production, and from the beginning demanded that he should be given a free hand to develop his themes in whatever way might seem best. To try to produce a definite story, at a fixed rate, and at a pre-arranged cost was, he said, not work for an artist, but for a mechanic. M. Gance, before he will undertake production, must have complete freedom guaranteed to him. He will listen gladly to helpful advice, but will not contemplate a film in which there is anyone in a position to turn this advice into orders. In "J'Accuse" M. Gance had a theme that suited his methods admirably. The story is stronger than the setting—a rare thing with a film drama—and the continuous idea stands out above scenery, characterisation and photography. And it is with ideas that M. Gance is most thoroughly at home.

* * *

To "Produce" Ivy Close.

Although "J'Accuse" was not M. Gance's first film, it was the first to be exhibited in England and the first to make him known over here. He is now engaged on another feature film, which would seem to be almost as ambitious in its aims as "J'Accuse." He is trying to catch the "soul" of a great railway, and to treat the train not as a mass of steel and noise, but, in the manner of Samuel Butler, as a creature with brain and passions. Miss Ivy Close is playing the part of an English girl in a French cast, and the company is now at work under the direction of M. Gance in the Tyrol. It will be interesting to see if this young author-producer can repeat the personal triumph he achieved with "J'Accuse."

THE MAGIC OF "MAKE-UP"

CONSTANCE TALMADGE
In a scene from the "Love Expert." A John Emerson—Anita Loos story. Directed by David Kirkland, which will be her fifth First National.

Beautiful Constance Talmadge in a scene from the "The Love Expert." She has been delighting picture-goers by her exquisitely natural performance in "A Virtuous Vamp," hailed by the critics as "unforgettable artistry" and "a great individual triumph" for Miss Talmadge.

And the lady with the horn-rimmed spectacles is— the same! Constance Talmadge and none other—as she appears in "The Perfect Woman" (!) You'd never have guessed it, would you?

CONSTANCE TALMADGE
In a scene from "The Perfect Woman," by John Emerson and Anita Loos. Directed by David Kirkland. A first National Picture.

THE CINEMA SCHOOL SCARE.

A Defence of the Teacher of Technique.

SCARE articles in the Press warning girls against having anything to do with Cinema Schools have been overdone. One grain of truth has been buried in a peck of prejudice.

The impression created by the wild tirades against the teachers of cinema acting is that cinema acting cannot be taught in schools. Why?

There have been many highly successful schools of Art. Most artists go to an Art School at some period or another of their career. There are successful schools of journalism and business training. Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Sir Frank Benson, Mr. Ben Greet, and many others have run famous schools of acting.

Most of the big opera companies run provincial touring companies, which are practically nothing else than schools.

There is nothing in cinema acting that makes it an exception to the rule that practice makes perfect.

In the film world, as nearly everywhere else, the stars of to-day started at the bottom of the ladder. If a producer can train the raw material into a leading lady in the studio, why cannot a man with similar experience do a similar thing in a cinema school?

In a newspaper office the editor-in-chief does not read every manuscript which is submitted for publication.

In a business house the managing director does not consider every proposition which is put before him, or interview every caller.

They could not do it even if every day had forty-eight hours instead of twenty-four; so the work of selection is primarily undertaken by an assistant, or a staff of assistants. The chief merely sees the selected few after the sifting by his subordinates.

Why should a busy film producer be expected to do things which the heads of departments in other walks of life find a physical impossibility.

Film producers nowadays have no time to go out of their way to train budding Mary Pickfords in elementary routine.

If they spot someone with a suspicion of latent talent in the crowd, that someone ought to be equipped with sufficient technical training to take advantage of any opportunity he offers.

And that is precisely what the genuine cinema school proceeds to do.

Its functions are necessarily limited. It cannot turn out a ready-made star. It cannot put talent where no talent exists.

But it can equip a talented tyro with sufficient technique to take him or her several rungs up the ladder towards success.

There is a well-known and very efficient school in London, for instance, which is connected with an equally well-known firm of film producers, for whom it acts as a "sieve," weeding out the inefficients, and giving a "grounding" to pupils showing promise before passing them on.

There are schools and schools, and the fact that there are a number of bogus ones need not frighten the prospective Mary Pickford a bit, so long as she is wise enough to avoid them.

The *genuine* cinema school sorts out the suitable from the unsuitable, gives them a training in technique sufficient to enable them to make the most of the latent talent displayed, and passes them on to the producer.

The rest depends, as in every other walk in life, on talent, opportunity and hard work, with a modicum of luck!

V. S.

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RATES ON APPLICATION

SCENARIOS IN BRIEF.

This Week's Pictures.

This week's pictures, many of which are British, included the following :—

AYLWIN .....*Hepworth*
THE AMATEUR GENTLEMAN.....*Stoll*
CALVARY .....*British Exhibitors*
KISMET .....*Jury*
THE BEGGAR PRINCE.....*Jury*
THE SPITFIRE OF SEVILLE.....*Gaumont*
MARY ELLEN COMES TO TOWN.....*Famous-Lasky*

* * *

" Nineteen Twenty-one " is starting well, very well indeed, in Movieland. The " releases " of the first three weeks of the year showed a great improvement on the corresponding period of Nineteen Twenty, especially in the matter of British productions, and in the forthcoming week we have almost a super-abundance of super-films ! The " first-nighter " amongst picture-playhouse patrons will have a busy time, as the above list will prove.

* * *

Meanwhile there is still more good news. In their endeavour to break the block booking system of the bad old days—which still exists—the British film firms are setting a noble example.

* * *

The Hepworth Company are setting themselves to produce one new picture every month in the present year, and every one of these pictures will be shown to the public within four months of the "Trade Show." Under the present system pictures are generally shown to the " Trade " and the " Press " at least a year, and sometimes more, before the poor picture-playgoer, who, like the tax-paying public, pays for the production, gets a " look in."

* * *

In similar fashion the Alliance Film Company, another " all British " concern, are out for " quick releases," and are having a " Trade Show " of the screen version of "Carnival " on February 8th, and showing it to the public very little more than a month afterwards—on March 24th, to be exact.

* * *

And now for this week's films. As usual, the adaptation of the popular play or popular novel fills three-quarters of the bill. "Aylwin," " The Amateur Gentleman," " Kismet," "Calvary "—to mention only a few. These are all deservedly well-known stories or dramas already, and one cannot apply to them the couplet of the Yankee critic who wrote :—

" Hush, little failure, don't you cry,
You'll be a Movie bye and bye."

A Scene from "Aylwin," the Theodore Watts-Dunton classic.
Chrissie White (centre) as Winifred Wynne and Mary Dibley (right) as Singi.

First and foremost this week we have the Hepworth production of "Aylwin," from the famous novel by Theodore Watts-Dunton, with Henry Edwards as "Hal Aylwin," Chrissie White as "Winifred Wynne," and Mary Dibley as " Sinfi Lovell." When you add Gwynne as " Mrs. Aylwin," Amy Lorraine as "Meg Gudgeon," Gerald Ames as "Wilderspin," the artist, Henry Vibart as "Philp Aylwin," and E. C. Matthews as "The Village Tailor," with apologies to the rest, you have a really " all-star " cast—and British at that, thank goodness !

* * *

The story does not need re-telling here, the acting —the names themselves suffice—does not want describing—and it is only necessary to say that the setting is worthy of the rest, and that the film should be seen !

Do not miss the screen version in Stoll's " eminent British authors' series " of Jeffery Farnol's historical romance, " The Amateur Gentleman." The doings of a " gentleman " of fashion a hundred years ago and the desire of a young man to become a " gentleman," and how he failed, but won a wife, are interpreted on the screen in a manner worthy of the original story which has thrilled so many book-lovers. In the leading parts in a screen-play in which mere man predominates, Langhorne Burton, Cecil Humphreys, and Sinclair Hill cover themselves with glory in the respective parts of "Barnabas," "Wilfred Chichester," and the "Marquis of Jermingham."

* * *

"Calvary "—the fourth release of the British Exhibitors' Films—is a screen version of the novel by " Rita " of the same name, with Malvina Longfellow as " Lady Pamela," a part for which she is well cast. The screen adaptation has been well done by Walter C. Rowden, and the film is produced by Edwin J. Collins. This company, which is shortly about to produce " Hobson's Choice " and " Foul Play," has set itself a very high standard which it is maintaining well. Another feature in the cap of British productions.

* * *

" Kismet " is a Robertson-Cole production of the international stage success by Edward Knoblock, released by Jury's, with Otis Skinner, the American actor, in the part which Oscar Ashe played on the stage in this country. It was not, for obvious reasons, enacted " on the spot " for the pictures, but a replica

A Scene from " The Beggar Prince."
Sessue Hayakawa in the title rôle.

SINCLAIR HILL
As the Marquis of Jermingham, in " The Amateur Gentleman."

of the ancient City of Bagdad was constructed, covering many acres of ground, and giving a very faithful reproduction of the atmosphere of the East. The acting of Otis Skinner, and the elaborate setting—this must be one of the most costly films ever produced—make the production well worth seeing.

* * *

" The Spitfire of Seville," released this week by Gaumont, is a melodrama with a lot of action and fights, which deals with the intense hate and passions of a Spanish girl who loved an American artist. Hedda Nova, who is " starred " in the production, was once a dancer at the late Tzar's Court in Russia. She escaped at the beginning of the Bolshevist *régime*.

* * *

Sessue Hayakawa continues his screen triumphs in " The Beggar Prince," which will be seen at most of the picture theatres this week and next. It is an unusual story of a fisherman who became a prince, and a prince who became a fisherman, with Sessue Hayakawa in the dual rôle. It is a nice little fairy tale, nicely told and nicely acted, and as the Catalina Islands in California, one of the most beautiful groups in the world, were chosen for the " location " of the story, which starts in a picturesque fisher village, the setting leaves nothing to the desired.

* * *

" Mary Ellen Comes to Town " is a comedy-drama " featuring " Dorothy Gish. It is all about "crooks" and an unwilling " vamp "—quite amusing in its way.

MARY ODETTE.

The Great Little Tragédienne of the Film.

MARY ODETTE AT HOME.

(Where her interviewer discovers that beneath the demure Quaker ringlets and Madonna brow lurks a vivid sense of humour—to say nothing of an amazing vitality).

DENTISTS, I believe, can tell the life stories of their patients by the shape of their teeth, and psychologists can diagnose character and disposition from the smallest unconscious movements. It is also possible, I am convinced, to learn a great deal from the manner in which a person comes down stairs. As I waited for Miss Odette and heard her taking the flight from the floor above like a small human tornado I suspected that the lady possessed vitality, and probably enthusiasm. When she reached the bottom there was a moment's pause outside the door and she then came into the room demurely enough. The headlong descent of the stairs, however, was the real Miss Odette. She certainly is a vital person with a refreshingly natural manner and an amazing enthusiasm not only for her screen work but for a number of other things.

"Oh! yes," she agreed. "Of course I love it. If you didn't, you could never put up with the little trials of the studio. The hours are often so crazy. Perhaps one week you won't work at all or not more than a couple of hours, and in the next will be hard at it all night. My longest hours were from ten one morning to six the next, when an artist in the particular scenes had to go back to France. Eleven and twelve at night are fairly common hours."

Miss Odette confessed to a liking for "stunts," whether on horse-back, swimming or anything else that comes along. This desire for thrills was not even "damped" by an experience she had when filming "Torn Sails" off the coast of Wales. "It took a week," she said, "and when we came back we told everyone that we had spent a week in the water. That was almost true. At any rate we were actually in the water for six hours on end on one occasion." In this play the action of the story demanded a storm and finally the foundering of the small boat.

Elaborate arrangements had been made to assure that the boat would do a realistic founder at the right moment. "There was no difficulty about the storm," explained Miss Odette with a smile, "but it came rather too soon, and the boat was on the rocks long before its time. In the end the difficulty was not to be sure that it would sink when required, but to keep it afloat long enough to take the picture."

Miss Odette is also a keen animal lover and a most convincing anti-vivisectionist. She is an active member of the society which was formed by Jack London to protest against the cruelty used in training animals to perform tricks for the stage. Before I left, in fact, she had produced a compendious form to which she demanded my signature and had assured me very solemnly that she "adored" animals. She then told me a diverting story of the lily white doe which appears with her in the British Actors' film of "Lady Clare." In the film it is the quietest and most docile of creatures, but in its early days as a film debutante it did not take quite so kindly to the actor's art, and it was left to Miss Odette to persuade the creature to look on a film life with a little less prejudice. She coaxed it with endless patience until at last it did realise that there was nothing to be afraid of. "I always smile," she said, "when I think of that wonderfully behaved little beast in the film, and I remember the day when it towed me all round the field on the end of a rope when I first tried to make friends."

Miss Odette, though now finding time only for film work, made her first public appearance as a small person of thirteen in the legitimate drama. She played a number of child parts, including the First Fairy in the Granville Barker production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Then, as she puts it, she

Mary in another mood.

spent two gawky years, too big for child parts and too small for anything else before starting in Movie Land.

On the stage she was not, however, Miss Odette, but Miss Odette Goimbault, a name which few people could pronounce and fewer remember—I have just copied it from a card—so that after she had been called every possible variation of the name from Campbell to Gimlet, she decided that for professional purposes it would have to be changed. The public, it may be remembered, was asked to decide what the new name should be, and a staggering number of suggestions was received. Every person who sent in a suggestion was to receive a photograph, and Miss Odette boiled with indignation when she told me of the heinous manner in which it was proposed to send out these cards. " They were actually wrapped in some discarded literature of an anti-suffrage flavour. And I," she explained, " had been a keen suffragist from the age of six. Why at nine I was editing a paper which combined suffrage views with anti-vivisection. So I took out all the anti-suffrage pamphlets and wrapped the photographs in anti-vivisection literature instead."

" So you see," Miss Odette added, " even if I had thousands and thousands a year I should know what to do with it. I should work for children and animals." It appears that Miss Odette is also a " godmother," and has adopted a child somewhere in Central Europe to which to send clothes and toys. " In time I shall know my godchild's name and address," she explained. At present the fortunate young person's identity is veiled in anonymity.

" I suppose you get a lot of letters from cinema goers? " I asked. "A good many, and some of them such nice ones. A tremendous lot of them are from girls, and though a good many are from people who only want to write and say nice things, it is surprising to find how many people are positively certain that although they have failed at everything else they could make a success of film work. They don't seem to realise that it may possibly require some sort of qualifications or be hard or difficult work. There seems to be something about the screen that is different from any other job; but," she added with a laugh, " I often wonder if young men write to the Prime Minister and imagine because he gets a big salary that all his clerks get fabulous pay as well. The public doesn't seem to apply the same logic to film work as it does to other professions."

Miss Odette during the summer spent a couple of months playing in two films for a Dutch company in Holland. She is full of admiration for the speed with which the production and the release of the films was contrived. " Within two weeks of taking the last scene one of the films was actually being shown in the principal Amsterdam theatre, and, of course, it has not been released over here yet."

Her great ambition at the moment is to find a small cottage in exactly the right spot where she and her mother can live when she is not actually working. I suspect that there would have to be accommodation for a number of dogs, a hen run, and—though I am not positive about this—a cowshed, if Miss Odette is to be really happy. At all events, never, never, will she keep a British bird in a cage. I have an idea that that piece of paper I signed may have pledged me not to do so either.

ELSIE JANIS

Whose spirited performance with Stanley Lupino in " It's All Wrong," gives the lie to its title so far as this brilliant show is concerned. Elsie is an avowed "movie fan." One of her own most successful films was "A Regular Girl," in which she played lead.

HERO OF THE RING AND OF THE SCREEN. [*Delphi.*

M. Georges Carpentier exhibits new prowess in his expert handling of Mademoiselle Jacqueline Carpentier.

(*A hitherto unpublished photograph, special to "Movie-Land."*)

MARRIAGE

Is the most respectable and most honourable estate, it brightens and purifies all human life. *Whoever does ought to make marriage a more perfect union, is a benefactor to the whole human race.* Marriage ennobles; indeed, it may be said marriage is the *climax* of human happiness.

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MUNICIPAL MOVIES.
A MOVIE-LAND FIT FOR CHILDREN TO LIVE IN.

By V. Dismore.

THE critics of " the movies " may roughly be divided into two classes—the would-be prohibitionists and the progressivists—those who continue to regard the cinema as an artistic weed, and those who, while frankly recognising its limitations, are keenly alive to its marvellous possibilities in the development of public thought.

There are dismal Jimmies who will tell you, in spite of outstanding evidence to the contrary, that the main attraction of " the movies " is in their appeal to a voluptuous emotionalism; that their effect upon adolescence is wholly pernicious. " So," say they, " let us abolish the cinema."

The worst fault of people of this kind is that they entirely overlook a fundamental principle of life, namely, that you cannot turn back the wheel of progress. That the cinema is a potent factor in the advance of civilisation no one but the most obstinate of pessimists will deny. Its crudities, its follies, are the inevitable outcome of the extreme youth of its art. It is still in the adolescence of experimentation.

* * *

Whatever may be the failings of cinematography of to-day, it holds within itself the machinery for opening up vast new realms of interest and information, and for this reason cannot for long remain unacknowledged as an educational adjunct even by the most fanatical of pedants.

One evidence of the vitality of the cinema may be seen in the recent growth of " movie " journalism. In some respects it has not been a promising growth, but there is now clearly evident a steady progression towards constructive literary criticism of movieland, criticism by the people for the people. Until a comparatively recent date the film programme was far below the intelligence of the public for whom it catered. The reason for this was that the cinema first of all attracted its audiences mainly by the novelty of its art. Production was largely in the hands of enterprising but poorly educated business men whose object was frankly to exploit the morbid tendencies of human emotionalism for profit. Nowadays, there is a widespread demand for facilities for public criticism of film fare (a demand, incidentally, which it is a specific object of " Movie-Land " to meet), and the result is seen in a definite forward movement in all types of film.

* * *

So much for the film situation as it affects adults. In considering the younger generation, we have to look at the matter from a somewhat different point of view.

It is obvious that the cinema is to play an important part in the education of children. There is, indeed, every evidence that the film will ultimately become an integral part of the school curriculum. This, however, is a separate study. What I am referring to now is the film's *indirect* educational influence upon children. To thousands of children nowadays life would be a desolation without the magic of the movies, and here we have a factor in our national life pregnant with brilliant possibilities. Although the standard of the cinema will ultimately be determined by public demand, *the film has unlimited opportunities for moulding public taste in embryo, that is, in the child.* Present criticism of the cinema will only take us a certain distance. If it is to realise its utmost possibilities we must see that the children are educated to demand the highest.

* * *

Here we come up against a big problem. Admittedly the average film programme is not suitable for children throughout, although it may be in sections, chiefly for the reason that much of it is incomprehensible to them. It muddles their minds instead of enlightening them. The obvious solution is the institution of children's cinemas throughout the country. But here we come up against a fresh problem. Proprietors assure us that the child's cinema is a financial impossibility.

From a business point of view it may be. Personally, however, I am convinced that the child's cinema has got to come, that it will come. The question is how?

* * *

I think there is an opportunity here for municipal enterprise. If we can once get influential townsmen to realise how great a part the cinema is to play in the education of the young, there is more than a possibility that the child's cinema will be looked upon as being as essential to the town as a public library, public baths, and similar institutions, and it should be an integral part of those holding positions of responsibility in the movie world to bring home the necessary conviction to the minds of those whom we must look to for the establishment of the child's cinema.

Until this is accomplished, something might be done to induce parents to take an active interest in the scheme. I myself am convinced that parents would be willing to take their share in financing any movement whose main object is the welfare and advancement of their little ones. But here again it would be essential to bring home conviction of the film's vital influence upon the lives of the younger generation.

Before this can be done much propaganda work will be necessary, but the object is a good one, and well worth while. " Movie-Land " makes the suggestion.

Who follows?

Our Short Story.

ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD.

THE author bent over the white hand of his leading lady, and kissed it with the passion of despair.

"Then your decision is final?"

"Absolutely final, dearest. You and I cannot walk to happiness over the grave of another. The strong for the weak, sweetheart. It is decreed that the strong should suffer. Your wife need not know that yours is conscript love. Be good to her. Give her all she wants. . . ."

"Conscript love! . . . My God! As if one *can* conscript love!"

"You can't, Paul. But that is what marriage imposes on those who undertake its obligations. Those of us who are outside its dominion——"

"Francesca! I implore you——"

"Hush! dear. No more. I am the interloper. We rebels must be prepared to pay the price of our rebellion. . . . Au revoir, Paul! I must save myself a little for to-night. The play's the thing, you know!"

* * *

It had been a marvellous histrionic *tour de force*. The audience rose as one man, cheering, fluttering handkerchiefs, while the sound of women's furtive sobbing broke intermittently through the tumultuous clamour for Francesca Gaynor—and the author. But it was Francesca they yelled for. They knew who had made Paul Cunningham's success. And their enthusiasm was stimulated to fever pitch by the knowledge that the great tragedienne had undertaken her arduous new rôle just after slow recovery from an illness that had banished her from London for several months. . . .

Suddenly, against the background of black velvet curtains (the producer had been worthy of the piece)—their idol appeared, alone. White as a lily, and as slim and frail, looking as if at any moment she must swoon from sheer exhaustion, Francesca Gaynor stretched out one slender arm to the sea of faces. It was almost as if she was imploring them to spare her, to grant her peace. Then she turned, still with that look of appeal in her wonderful eyes, to the author, who now stood beside her. Hand in hand they acknowledged the wild ovation. It was as if they clung together for mutual support in the leaping torrent of emotion that swirled about them.

* * *

In the gloomy grey stone corridor the doorkeeper politely but firmly interposed his massive person between the door of Miss Gaynor's private dressing-room and a large, highly-perfumed lady who was obviously suffering from great emotional stress.

"I'm sorry, Madam. Miss Gaynor gave the strictest instructions. No one at all——. Oh! I beg your pardon, Mrs. Cunningham." The man was instantly and abjectly apologetic as the author's wife thrust her card, with a tip to match, into his hand. "I didn't realise——"

"All right. You needn't take the card to Miss Gaynor. Don't bother to announce me."

With a rattle of innumerable trinkets, a clinging odour of patchouli and the light of battle in her prominent blue eyes, Mrs. Paul Cunningham burst into the dressing-room. The great actress, in the fatigue of acute reaction, lay huddled like a wounded bird on the corner of a low divan, her head in her hands. As if waking from another world, she gazed uncomprehendingly at the woman who, with countenance distorted and eyes ablaze, confronted her like a menacing fury. Somewhere in the back of her mind Francesca thought of Jane Eyre and Rochester's mad wife. And even as the thought was born, Sybil Cunningham turned on her with a vile word. Francesca sat still and white under an avalanche of abuse. "You vampire! Proud of your conquest, aren't you? Proud of stealing my husband from me? Yes! I happen to be Paul Cunningham's wife. He's mine, and I intend to keep him, you——"

"Mrs. Cunningham! Please! You are overwrought. I——"

"Overwrought! Good God! Do you expect me to stand quietly on one side while you wreck my life! Do you think I'm a fool? Do you think I didn't see with my own eyes—before the curtain——"

"Please!" Francesca had risen, forcing her white lips to a smile. "I must beg you to calm yourself. Your husband is entirely yours. I haven't the least desire to take him from you. Let me——"

"*Sybil!*"

At the peremptory exclamation both women turned, to see Paul Cunningham standing in the doorway.

"Just as I thought!" shrieked the wife. "Assignations with your mistress in her dressing-room——"

"Sybil! Be silent! How dare you insult——"

"Please—let me speak!" Francesca's eyes met the man's angry gaze in mute entreaty. It was as if she had said aloud: "Leave this to me."

"Mrs. Cunningham is under a terrible misapprehension. She mistakes our professional comradeship for—for something vile. I was begging her to let me

FILM TYPES—I. "THE VAMPIRE."

Guaranteed to lure a Scotchman away from whisky. Learnt to "vamp" at an early age under her music master. Said to have inspired the song "Two Lovely Black Eyes."

ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD—continued.

explain. . . ." A white hand reached out, again with that mutely imploring gesture, to take the hand of the other woman. "I beseech you to believe me." The beautiful voice that had worked such magic on the stage had never held accents more seductive, more hypnotic in their effect upon her audience. "Believe that I would not take your husband from you, even if I loved him." Again the beautiful eyes held the man in subjection. "But I am only his fellow-worker; close comrade, if you like, but comrade only of his mind."

"I'm his wife. I'm the mother of his children——!" It was a whimper now, like the cry of a whipped dog. "When I saw you both standing hand in hand before the curtain . . . I was afraid . . . Oh! it was agony!"

"Dear lady, there is nothing to fear. I have only borne the children of his mind. Your husband's work has helped to make me, but don't you think there's been something mutual in our association? Don't you think you've benefited just a little by it, too? You have so much! Wealth and position, beautiful children, a famous husband——"

"Paul!" With the sobbing laughter of a spoilt child who is content that all is right again with her little world, the partner of his joys flung herself into her husband's arms, bangles rattling triumphantly, while the odour of patchouli enveloped him in a familiar cloud.

Unflinchingly, Francesca in her turn submitted to a large and efflorescent embrace. Then she smiled into the eyes of the man who could not return her gaze, so serenely victorious. . . .

"Take her home, Paul," she said. "Take her home—and reassure her."

* * *

Midnight had struck. In a quiet flat in South Kensington Francesca Gaynor bent over the cot of a sleeping babe.

"Paul!" she murmured. "My little Paul . . ."

And in her eyes shone a light that no wildly clamorous audience had ever seen; a light that only Paul Cunningham Gaynor, aged six months, had the power to evoke.

FRISSE-POULET.

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A TALK WITH OWEN NARES.

(*Exclusive to "Movie-Land"*).

ONE has read so much nonsense about his immaculate appearance and his regular features that it is a treat to meet Mr. Owen Nares in person. Certainly he is nice looking, and undoubtedly he possesses an attractive smile, but when talking to him it is none of these things that one first notices. One is impressed not by any superficial qualities but by his sincerity and his generous and impartial appreciation of other artists. He is not overcome with admiration for his own abilities. His enthusiasm is obviously for the play as an artistic whole rather than as an opportunity for a personal triumph.

"Acting," he said, " either in the theatre or for the screen is just work, though interesting work, and, however good, can never be the deciding factor in the success of a play. Good acting, I think, can never save a bad play, though bad acting may wreck a mediocre one. The work for the artist in the theatre is production. The producer has to decide on the method, and then has to see that the idea develops on the lines he has conceived. That is creative work."

There is nothing Mr. Nares likes so well as to take an unproduced play and to read it through, imagining the action and visualising the dramatic situations.

OWEN NARES.

He attributes the success of the American films to their brilliant producing and to the fact that the stories filmed are specially written for the screen. " Film technique," he added, " is so entirely different from that of the theatre and the spoken play that a stage success will often be a complete failure on the screen. Many good stage plays depend on delicate and ingenious dialogue for their success. These are the plays—with very little action—that I think are bound to film ineffectively. The fact that such men as

Henry Arthur Jones and Arnold Bennett are now making a special study of screen technique proves that they realise that the cinema demands plays specially written and differently constructed."

"And is the difference as great from the actor's point of view?"

Mr. Nares was sitting in front of his glass brushing his hair before making up. He turned a slow smile upon me as he brushed.

"Forgive this vanity," he murmured, with just sufficient good-humoured emphasis to show that he was amused and a little cynical at all the rubbish that has been written about his appearance. There is very little of the vain young man about the real Owen Nares.

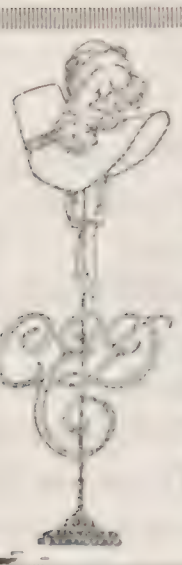
"To some extent," he replied, "film technique, like that of the theatre, is mostly a trick. You have to learn it, but the differences are obvious, and not difficult to pick up. On the stage, to take one instance, it is bad acting to allow a hiatus between question and answer in dialogue. The answer must come right on the top of the question or the action will hang fire. For the screen the very pause that would be wrong in the theatre is essential in the studio. The pause is literally one of feet—to allow the producer to make allowance for his sub-title. 'Give me a couple of feet here,' he will say, and the answer does not come until after this pause. Not to make this pause in front of the camera would be just as wrong as to allow the action to hang fire in the theatre."

At this point a small boy made a horrible noise in the passage and banged on the dressing room door with a loudly warning fist. As he rubbed the colour into his face with a pensive finger, Mr. Nares continued to talk through innumerable sticks of paint.

"I always feel that it is easier to play an emotional part in the studio, largely because one's entire audience—the camera—is only a few feet away instead of being partly up in the roof. Expression and action, therefore, have not to be so broad. A mere movement of the eyes or a slight contraction of the muscles will 'get over' on the screen that in the theatre would be too restrained to reach the gallery. That, again, is only a trick."

"And, when playing an emotional part, do you try to 'get inside' the character you are playing?"

"No. I believe myself that to do so is wrong. I know that when I begin to 'feel' my part, it always means that I am losing grip of my audience. The audience is a great help, and it is often the theatre more than the actor who is really responsible for exceptional peformances. At the same time if I ever feel (and it does not often happen!) 'By jove! I'm giving a fine performance to-night,' I can be perfectly certain that I am giving a particularly bad one. It's usually when an actor feels least certain and most nervous that he does his best. Certainly if an audience is sympathetic it makes playing much more pleasant, but I have heard a great many brilliant actors say that they have given their finest performances to audiences that were a little inclined to be critical."



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A PROPHET IN CLOVER.

By D. Leigh Bennett.

(Editor's Note.—This is an article of absorbing interest to all who are directly or indirectly concerned with the success of the cinema. Mrs. Leigh-Bennett is convinced she has discovered the creator of the new technique which will revolutionise film-making.)

COLONEL NETTERVILLE BARRON, C.M.G., M.V.O.

A PROPHET, when his prophecies are justified, should always be allowed to say "I told you so." In my last article I dared to prophesy that the day would come when somebody would evolve the right cinema acting technique. Four days after I had written this I found that somebody; and, what was still more interesting, a brilliant little group of nobodies who can already demonstrate it in a manner to take one's breath away.

This stock company is going to revolutionise film acting, because the members of it have been trained by a man who sees that the theory of dramatic movement for the cinema must be essentially different from dramatic movement on the stage (helped by the spoken word and voice), or in ballet (helped by dancing, colour and music), or in opera (helped and hindered by song and orchestra). This man is Colonel Netterville Barron—artist, psychologist and physical culturist, the coming producer, if I dare prophesy again.

As the result of his theory and training these actors and actresses are not marionettes ordered suddenly to think themselves into an emotional state, and then represent that state of mind in odd, unco-ordinated gestures; nor are the people aping, before a camera, expressions quite suitable in spoken drama but quite inadequate in a wordless play. They were one and all of them practical artists who knew their job because they had spent nine months learning its most rudimentary laws.

* * *

Each member of this wonderful company can make a minute and perfectly scientific analysis of the character he or she is asked to represent; knows exactly the movements involved in its portrayal, and has practised them so often that they can be done with that automatism without which no artist is master of his craft. Just as a musician can only get feeling into his music when his execution is so perfect that his *mind* is *free*, so a film artist gets feeling himself and can convey it

to the audience only when *his* execution—the movement of his face and body—is mechanical. A mechanical or perfect technique leaves an actor free to maintain that " vigilant artistic sensitiveness " which makes onlookers think " how spontaneous and inevitable and beautiful " ! Whereas there can be no seeming spontaniety, inevitability or beauty without severe preliminary thought and training.

Now that has been one of the chief troubles with the cinema. There has never been any thought or training concerning its dramatic technique. No one hitherto has studied the laws of movement as they are related to those emotions which have dramatic significance; it has not even been realised that if a cinema artist has to tell his story by gesture alone, then he must study gesture in an altogether novel manner. No existing theory will help him, because no other form of acting makes such exclusive demands upon gesture as a medium of expression

* * *

Gesture or movement as understood by the ordinary producer is simply pose; or rather a series of jerky poses believed to be life-like. But in real life civilised people do not express their emotions in gesture. Save in very exceptional circumstances they pull themselves up in time. That is why most acting on the films seems so unreal, so false to life. And that is why no artistic results will ever be obtained by these exaggerated and unrelated contortions, but only when it is realised that acting for the cinema means having a real knowledge of the laws of movement—movement as it would be used by mankind if we had no language; if we lived instinctively or naturally, and so allowed our limbs and faces to reveal our emotional states.

It is easy, as Colonel Barron says, to pose. The whole art of movement lies in getting to the pose and then getting away from it; in knowing why every flickering motion is significant, and in getting this conflict of emotions in their proper pschyological relationship.

* * *

Thus, when a member of this company is asked to portray a person hearing a menacing sound that he does not understand the gestures used would be those belonging to the feelings of wonder, fear, self-assertion (if male), self-submission (if female) and, possibly, anger. These gestures would be the exact physical equivalents of the emotions wrought upon—therefore always typical, but varying in what the producer calls accent, degree and pace. You may think this sounds monotonous. But once seen it is the orthodox posings that seem monotonous; this eminently scientific method achieves extraordinary variety, and every degree of light and shade.

But it is difficult on paper to convey what Colonel Barron has accomplished. And, had one merely heard his theories one might have thought—too hastily—this man is a high-browed theorist and no producer will trouble to listen to what he has to say. Yet, when one sees, as I saw, any member of his company step forward in ordinary " gym " dress and demonstrate in a faultless series of gestures any type of dramatic emotion—compounded with psychological exactitude, and executed with the most perfect balance, accent, certainty and eloquence, then one understood that this was no mere theory, but that for the first time in film history the true language of the film—the language of movement, with grammar complete, had been evolved.

* * *

Of course a tremendous amount of work has been necessary to get this fine result. Netterville Barron has for years past studied psychology and the laws and practice of bodily movement. He has also absorbed the most modern theories on rhythm, balance, relaxation and general physical culture. His company had to begin at the beginning and learn something of all this before any acting was thought about. And even now these highly-trained artists practise their gymnastic and dramatic exercises every day.

Watching the outcome of this combination of brains, knowledge and hard training one begins, at last, to see the cinema as the new art-form and truly educative force it ought to be.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE THEATRE.
THE GREAT LOVER.

By Mrs. Gordon Craig.

THE time, our own.

The scene, the manager's office of the Gotham Opera House—the usual distracted managers, secretaries, stage managers, and press agents—then crowds of excited artistes, all with their little grievances, about which they make more noise than one could believe possible, and then the great man "Paurel," or rather "Moscovitch," for although it is a fine play and part, it is he who makes it a great one.

It is impossible for me to say what a joy Mr. Moscovitch's performance was to me—we have, of course, many splendid and charming actors—but he is from the Gods—and long may they spare him to us

Never, since Henry Irving left us, has there been anyone like him; not that they are alike, except in that genius is akin wherever we find it. And how define genius?—in the actor what is it that arrests us, and sweeps all else from our vision?

(Photo by Foulsham & Banfield)

MR. MAURICE MOSCOVITCH as "Paurel."
MISS JULIA JAMES as "Ethel Warren" in "The Great Lover."

What is genius? Inspiration! Imagination—a perfect instinct to convey the inspiration—in the actor's case, across the footlights—as the painter transfers it to his canvas, in such a way that one feels there *could* be no other way.

How entirely one felt this with Henry Irving—what a loss it is to the present young generation not to have known him!

I look back on a magnificent series of Lyceum productions since I was a child, as the greatest privilege, and education, that one could possibly have had at that time. Those, and *nothing else*—being considered worth "a long journey to London." But the Lyceum productions were a religion among their faithful followers—there were "Lyceum money boxes"! Meaning months of patient savings in preparation for the next "first night." Long journeys up from the country in the snow perhaps—or whole day (even whole *night*) waits outside the theatre—I remember one such wait. It was the first time Irving played "Waterloo" in London—it was a matinée for charity, and for most of us that meant the pit!

The first two stragglers arrived up from the country about 8-30 a.m., and one by one they drifted in, until by eleven or so practically the whole pit full had arrived, and were patiently waiting.

Perhaps we were feeling a little cold and discouraged—when from within the theatre—out of the silence came "The girl I left behind me" played by the band as it passes down the street in the "Story of Waterloo," and we knew that Irving was there rehearsing. It was a great moment! Our hearts rushed out to him, spirits rose in the most wonderful way, the next two or three hours went like a flash, and we had our reward when it was our privilege to be a part of the truly wonderful reception that was always given him, and Ellen Terry. Applause made up of admiration for them as artists, love and reverence for them personally, as all who knew them could but love and reverence.

Irving was the kindest and gentlest of men—yet he had more influence over those surrounding him, and working for him, than anyone else I ever met—there was little need for the "rules" made by Mr. Loveday and Bram Stoker. Irving's influence was further reaching than any control could possibly have been—his lightest wish was law with his company, and if anything ever did go wrong by accident, there was no need to reproach the culprit; to have failed "the governor" was punishment enough.

On that last night that he played in London, what was it that made that huge audience unable to leave the theatre, unable to let him go?

Visibly affected, almost to breaking point as he was, again and again he was recalled. The minutes almost grew to hours, and there was a presentation to be got through on the stage after "the show," as those behind the curtain knew—but the audience would not go! At last there was nothing to be done but to draw up the curtain and let the audience share in the presentation.

He did not come back to us, but that night will, I think, live in our memories always and be handed down as a tradition to our children.

But this is a long divergence from "The Great Lover," though not so far a step as might at first appear—greatness is always akin, and no one would have been more appreciative of Mr. Moscovitch's performance than Henry Irving.

No, I don't think they are alike except in their extraordinary gift of facial expression, but then I have not yet seen Mr. Moscovitch in over a score of parts, but I hope to! And of the present performance, what can I say but that it is a convincing, powerful, and above all, an intensely *human* one, and all with the sure touch of the true artist.

We hate "Paurel," yet we are sorry for him, as he means we shall be, and at the first chance he gives us he has our sympathies.

"It is the first sacrifice I ever made, chérie, I am glad it is for you," he says, and so gracefully, that "Ethel" hardly sees the ache beneath, and then just as surely when, immediately after, his particular form of temptation crops up again, there he is still as bad as ever! But still we love him! and so it will always be. Genius will not be denied! and, after all, who would be so churlish as to grudge one of its privileges?

It is impossible to pick out any passages in his performance when all were perfect, but, of course, the end of the second act, where Paurel loses his voice, is the great opportunity, and Mr. Moscovitch loses no atom of it. One felt the tragedy of his loss, *with* him absolutely. We were in the singer's dressing room, in the theatre, in the heart of a tragedy—that was all, and so tense was the tragedy of it that when the curtain came down it was almost a relief.

All the rest of the performers were so excellent that it would be impossible to individualise. It was very sad to miss Mr. A. E. George as Potter, but Mr. E. H. Brooke was excellent in the part, and Mr. Morton Selten as the Manager, absolutely true to life; and, in a part easily exaggerated, quite without exaggeration. And the badly transplanted atmosphere which generally hangs about plays imported from America, was wholly absent from this production—it is for all countries and all people.

DRESS AND DECORATION.

For the Jeune Fille.

A dress of black taffetas with black lace, lightened by touches of hand embroidery at the neck.

DRESS AND DECORATION.

By Madame Halle.

A CLEVER woman once said to me: "I used to love clothes better than anything. Now I am far more interested in my house." But the truth of it is that the two arts of Dress and Decoration are very closely related, and very often found in one and the same person.

I don't think I care for the idea of decorating the drawing room with the sole view to its being a background for a particular gown in which to receive one's friends. It's a little unkind to the friends! and apt to be a little expensive in these days, if our rooms have to be decorated to suit every new frock. I think the most one can attempt is to consider what will be the best general background for the majority—oneself included—and perhaps gold is, after all, one of the best—failing real old oak panelling—which is the most beautiful of all.

It would, of course, be delightful if we *could* design a room for our every mood. A grey room, perhaps, for our meditative, sympathetic hours; a white or pink one, with bunches of country flowers, and organdi muslin at the windows for the time when we want to forget the fog outside, or a purple one with wonderful crimson hangings, and gold braziers, with great masses of anemones, crimson and purple, and a gold ceiling for our more dreamy moments, and gowns, of course, in sympathy.

At the moment very radical changes, largely effected by Poiret, are being introduced into our ideas on decorating, and the English are taking to them gradually.

Inside and outside our houses are to be orgies of colour, he tells us, and I agree with him so far as the inside of them is concerned, but am rather attached to my grey old London, and fear lest it should lose something of its dignity if it were painted up, however wonderfully, like a child's Noah's Ark! Also although I have the greatest faith in Poiret himself, I rather dread his imitators, who essay his effects without the genius behind them, and merely succeed in a travesty of his ideas.

Many of our old houses are so beautiful in themselves that I think they are, after all, best treated in the simplest possible manner with a soft, plain, light tone throughout, and the colour element left to be supplied by wonderful brocade hangings, tapestries and rugs; but for the mediocre house, given a few square, honest rooms, and beautiful fireplaces, which I *do* rather insist upon, it is wonderful what can be done with a sound and courageous selection of colours.

I think it is such a good idea of Poiret's, too, to have strong colours for the ceilings, where, although it is not always in our range of vision, we have it up there in reserve whenever we want cheering up, and I notice he very often repeats in his carpets, and gives us, perhaps, black, or something more restful for the walls in between.

It is he, too, who is reviving the old art of "picking out" in panels and mouldings. As he does it, it is charming, generally in tones closely related to each other, so that one gets a general effect like a chord of music, which is extraordinarily pleasing.

Many of these rules apply equally to dress, if we would but remember it. I think at present we give a little less consideration to dress from the artistic standpoint than it deserves. I do not mean "artistic" in the sense in which it is so often wrongly used. No one loathes the "arty" dress more than I do, and mercifully it is almost a thing of the past; but I think a little more daring, balanced by good taste and knowledge, we might indulge in with advantage, or failing this, a little more confidence in those who have made a life study of the art of dress, in whose hands, unless we have a very decided gift for it ourselves, it is best to leave things.

Poiret's lovely materials, embodying as they do many beautiful schemes of colour, are a great inspiration and help to the makers of dresses, and can be relied on quite safely, either to supply the note of colour to an otherwise colourless gown, or as a basis from which to work outwards for schemes of colour.

In a little tea-gown which I have before me one such material in printed satin of brilliant hues and bold design is used for the underdress, veiled all but for a few inches of the skirt in the predominant colour note; in this case a lovely blue—a sash in all the colours perfectly matched in plain satin threads through the waist holding the tunic lightly in place, while beads dyed to the blue of the chiffon weight the hanging ends of the overdress and sleeves.

This is a very young tea gown, and would form a desirable item in a girl's trousseau, when it is likely to be her first essay in the tea gown direction, and therefore of supreme importance.

The little dress in our illustration of to-day is of quite another description, though also designed for a young girl.

It is of black taffetas with black lace and net on the skirt only, the bodice being severely plain but for a little hand embroidery at the neck, which gives it a touch of lightness. This is a little frock which looks charming in movement, and is, therefore, particularly suitable for the *thé dansant*.

H. Halle

OUR PARIS LETTER.

(In which an Englishman in Paris keeps a Frenchman in London in touch with the movie world, in all its varying phases, across the Channel.)

MON CHER PIERRE,

I should have thought the unemployment question was quite acute enough here without the Government taking the risk of putting fifty thousand men in the cinema trade out of work. But that is just what appears quite likely to happen. As a Cockney operator over here on a job said to me the other day, "Bli'me, sir, the Govermint ain't arf puttin' the tride through it 'ere. They grouses abaht the rite of exchange, and it's their own blinkin' fault 'arf the time. It's the French cinemer what's taxed 'eaviest and censored somethink crool, while us folks finds no 'indrance."

Leaving the question of the rate of exchange on one side, my operator friend was quite right. What does your French Government think it's doing? A new law voted in June of last year at a morning sitting of the Chambre des Députés, at which sitting incidentally only twenty-five members were present, makes it possible for a new tax up to fifty per cent. of the State tax on cinemas to be levied by the municipal authorities.

The directors of the movie enterprises in the Seine Department therefore sent a delegation, headed by Mr. Brézillon, the President of the French Union of Cinematograph Managers, to inform the Prefect of the Department that under the burden of all these taxes the trade neither would nor could carry on the exploitation of this industry.

Really, Pierre, if they do shut down it will not surprise me one little bit. *Sans blague*. . . . . Well, hang it all, just look at the taxes! Over and above the 10 per cent. for the Assistance Publique, there's a State tax of from 15 to 25 per cent., and now the local authorities are to be allowed to impose this new one. The result is that some establishments will have to pay up to 40 per cent. on their takings; what's left goes to settle running expenses. . . . and the unhappy shareholders!

It's enough to break anybody's heart . . . and then, of course, the two films which did get it from the censor where the chicken got the axe (I speak of "L' Homme du Large" and "Li Hang the Cruel") were perfectly innocent home-grown productions; I have seen the pieces that had to be cut out, and in comparison to certain scenes in a very much advertised American film now running here, they are more than innocuous.

* * *

When the motor bandits biffed the old bank messenger on the head and pinched his money, I'm sure that it was the moving pictures which inspired them . . . anyhow, this very sinister industry made the coup possible. In case you haven't heard the yarn, here it is.

Not a hundred miles from the Porte Maillot, certain firms were in the habit of making films in the streets adjoining the Bois de Boulogne. The residents therefore having become accustomed to strange doings, were not astonished one morning when the light was good, to see a car-load of masked men, armed to the teeth, draw up near a bank. An operator appeared in another car with his camera and started turning the picture in the presence of an admiring crowd, which cheered delightedly when an elderly man emerging from the bank was neatly sand-bagged and relieved of a black leather bag he was carrying. The outfit then quickly drove off, firing blank shots from repeating rifles, while the camera man followed in his car still filming furiously. "Come, m'sieur, get up now," said a policeman, who had been an interested spectator, "your friends have all gone." It was only then that the bank messenger was found to be really unconscious and his bag to have contained nearly a hundred thousand francs in cash, destined to pay off the hands of an adjacent factory.

* * *

Have you seen that De Max, that well-known artist, whose classic interpretations of Molière at the Comédie Française have won him such universal fame, has at length decided to face the movie camera? I hear that he has signed on with Monsieur René Coiffard, the director of a new enterprise, and will play in a film, the action of which takes place in the south of France. I do not yet know what title this picture will receive, but the scenario is by Maurice Lespinglot.

MLLE. MADYS

Now on contract with the Gaumont Company. She plays a big part in "The Thinker," which is to be released for public exhibition in February.

OUR PARIS LETTER—continued.

By the courtesy of one of the promoters of the scheme I can give you some exclusive information regarding an arrangement that has recently been concluded between the Agence Générale Cinématographique of Paris and The Ideal Films, Ltd., of London. It is an arrangement, as you will see, that will have a very far-reaching effect on the film industry here; in a few words, it amounts to this. From now onwards all the productions of the Ideal Films, Ltd., will be acquired for France, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland by the Agence Générale Cinématographique, while the Ideal Company will reciprocally dispose of all the films of that famous French producing house. Without any exaggeration, it is the biggest deal yet concluded between France and England, and I think you will agree with me that the organisers of the scheme are to be most heartily congratulated.

This is just the sort of thing which the French trade needed, and will help very materially to ward off the menace of what is generally termed Le Bloc Latin, of which I dare say you have heard. The Italian trade is trying to unite with that of France and other Latin countries to run their films reciprocally also, and to squeeze the Anglo-Saxon productions. Personally, I have not the impression that the French industry is very keen on this idea. Although some of the Italian productions are really excellent, one very rarely sees them here at present, which fact seems due to the lack of selling initiative on the part of the Italian managers more than to anything else. Also, these films have the tendency to be too long (generally four-reelers), and so do not appeal to the average cinemas.

There is also a great discussion waging here now as to the desirability of resuming cinema relations with Germany again. In the whole of their *post bellum* trade procedure with regard to cinematography, the Germans have really been rather clever; their very aloofness has made them quite courted, especially by the Italians, and everybody seems to be incredibly curious to find out exactly what our late enemies have been doing during the war, and what they may now have to offer us.

As the German Government is only allowing in 180,000 metres of foreign film per annum, the French trade, even if it managed to export one-tenth of this amount across the Rhine, would still be at a distinct disadvantage in view of what the Teutons would dump into France in exchange, unless a special protective tariff were established. In spite of the fact, however, that no definite convention about this matter exists, there is a Bosch film being hawked around Paris for which the proprietors ask no less a sum than 250,000 francs; no, mon ami, not marks, for that might be a reasonable sum, but francs . . . . . and the

SEE YOURSELF ON THE SCREEN

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EILEEN DENNIS

The popular Hepworth player, who wears the double laurels of danseuse and film star. Our picture shows her in her famous imitation of Pavlova's "Swan Dance."

OUR PARIS LETTER—continued.

curious thing about it is, old man, that one cannot find out any precise details about it.

By the way, have the cinemas at home started what you French folk call le Roman Cinema yet? You know what I mean . . . a serial story in a daily paper which is then shown on the screen in divers picture theatres every day during the week? I think it a perfectly excellent idea, but cannot remember having heard of the notion catching on in England.

* * *

I meant to tell you about the wonderful plan which Mr. Louchet, the editor of the Cinématographie Française, is carrying into execution, but have, unfortunately not yet been able to obtain all the necessary information on the matter. Anyhow, from what I've been told, it amounts to the installation of premises in the centre of Paris, which will be known as La Maison du Cinema. Here the movie men of all countries will not only find offices with lifts, heating, lighting, telephone, etc., but will have placed at their disposal all information relative to the trade in all its ramifications. They will be able to see all the latest productions, and I expect trade shows will take place there, too.

But I must go and see the place and find out all the details, which I will give you in my next letter.

All the best, old man,

Yours ever,

"CLOSE UP."

Hourly Shows.

In this country the continuous cinema performance is a thing of such general adoption that one seldom hears advocacy of any other policy. In the Scandinavian countries, however, where the standard of films is remarkably high, the continuous performance is by no means as common. In Stockholm, for instance, the programme is generally one taking two hours to run through, and the theatres, which do not open until the evening, are entirely cleared after each performance and a fresh audience is admitted. At Copenhagen, when an instalment, taking about fifty minutes, of a popular serial is being shown, it is quite common for the theatre to show nothing else, and the theatre is emptied and refilled every hour. The film starts punctually at the hour from seven until ten, and it is possible to book seats in advance for any of the four showings. Considering the short performance and in comparison with English prices the seats are expensive, being the equivalent in British money of 2/- and 1/-. The exhibitors claim that by this policy their theatres are better ventilated, and they are untroubled by those economically minded people who regard a cinema theatre as "somewhere warm to sit and talk" during the winter evenings.

A NEW VIOLET HOPSON FILM.

Brilliant achievement of a Woman Producer.

THERE are still quite a number of picture-goers who do not realise that one of their first favourites, Violet Hopson, is now not only a film star but a film producer. Her second film, " Kissing Cup's Race," has been trade shown and aroused unanimously favourable comment among the critics. "Kissing Cup's Race" is adapted from the famous poem by Campbell Rae-Brown, a poem that used to form part of every elocutionist's repertoire, for it could be relied on to "bring down the house." Needless to say, the thrills are intensified a hundredfold in the film version. Violet Hopson plays the leading part of Lady Constance, Gregory Scott appears opposite her as Lord Hilloxton, and Clive Brook plays Lord Rattlington.

Joe Plant, who is known as the "pocket Hercules" of the racecourse, appears as Bob Doon, the jockey.

All the racing scenes have been taken on actual racecourses at Epsom and Newmarket, while the stable scenes were taken at one of the most famous English training quarters. Six yearlings, valued at £60,000, were utilised in one of the big scenes, and the horse which appears as " Kissing Cup " won several races in actual classic engagements, when not " starring " for the film.

The grave of Fred Archer—the world's most famous jockey—is also shown.

The two big races of the film are masterpieces of realism—in the opinion of most critics, the very best that have ever been recorded by a cinematograph camera.

Miss Hopson's brilliant work is a triumphant example of what the feminine producer may achieve in the films of the future. Many a feminine picture-goer will doubtless recall, in her filmgoing experience, quite a number of films that would have gained considerably in accurate realism by the co-operation of a woman producer. In many respects Mr. Walter West stands out as one of the great pioneers of the film industry. He is to be heartily congratulated on his newest departure from tradition, in enlisting the co-operation, on the producing side, of his world-famous star.

MISS VIOLET HOPSON

CINEMA FINANCE: Increased Interest in Cinema Shares.

IT is early days yet to say what 1921 has in store for us, in the world of finance, but certainly the first fortnight of the New Year has produced a marked revival of interest on the part of the investor in the general stock and share markets, and it is pleasing to record also that the industrial section has received considerable support, especially from provincial investors in the North of England and beyond the Border.

* * *

The business of public entertainment naturally falls within the industrial category, and it is a good feature to note that buying orders for cinema shares have been received during the past fortnight from many sources, so that there is a clear indication that potentialities of the industry, as a dividend earner, are, day by day, being more fully realised by the investor who favours sound British Industrials.

* * *

Some writers in the Daily Press have been speaking of a slump in the attendances of the public at public entertainments, especially at theatrical and cinema houses. This may be true in some isolated cases, but from personal enquiry in London we are convinced that such an assertion, generally speaking, is inaccurate. But where a falling off in receipts has really taken place it will invariably be found that the cause lies at the doors of the management of the particular houses where the fall in admission money has taken place. The cinema patron has become far more discriminating, and wants the best show for his money. He is weary of looking at second-rate American films, which have been dumped upon us during the war years, and is making a firm stand as to the quality of his film entertainment. Hence the disappearance of the queue at some of the houses where second and third-rate films, poor in quality, inaccurate in detail, and generally lacking in interest, have been shown.

* * *

And this brings us to the financial point of the matter. Before investing money in any cinema enterprise the intending investor should satisfy himself that the houses run by the particular company, whose shares he is contemplating purchasing, are being run on sound and up-to-date lines, that the buildings are comfortable, and well fitted, that they are situated in good neighbourhoods, where there is a surrounding population sufficient to fill the particular houses, and, above all, where the management offer its patrons a really good show, and consequently good value for their money. What might pass muster in the dark days of the war, when everyone craved for a few hours' distraction and forgetfulness, will not produce dividends in these more peaceful, and more critical, days.

* * *

And now a word of warning to the investor in cinema enterprises, and more especially to the small capitalist who has not the time or experience to sift the wheat from the chaff. During the latter half of last year, after the boom period on the Stock Exchange, when a score or more of new industrial and other enterprises were floated every week, advantage was taken of the quieter markets to circularise the shareholders of many industrial companies, including the holders of cinema shares, offering shares in cinema undertakings which can only be described as very third-rate cinemas. It is a safe rule to consign all such offers from unknown persons to the waste paper basket. They are invariably made by small syndicates, or by individuals, whose business it is to unload on the unsuspecting investor shares which, if not valueless, are nearly so, and which are certainly not worth anything like the price asked for them.

* * *

In this connection we would observe that we shall, at all times, be only too pleased to advise as to any such offers which may be received by any of our readers. But we would emphasise the fact that if our advice is desired it should be sought *before* a purchase is made, and not afterwards, when it will usually be too late for us to utter a word of warning, and thus to save our readers from future loss.

* * *

Nothing has been heard recently by the shareholders in the Palace Theatre, London, as to the deal arranged many months ago by which they were to sell their property, out and out, to a syndicate, for a sum of £345,000. As it was announced at the time that the purchase would be completed in December it would seem desirable that the directors should now make some official statement as to the cause of the delay. It will be remembered that a very ambitious scheme was proposed to rebuild the theatre as a Cinema de Luxe with restaurant, etc., attached, and, in fact, to make it the most up-to-date house in town.

* * *

The Mancheser Palace of Varieties reports the declaration of an interim dividend of 1/6 per share, free from income tax, which is at the same rate as last year. Several other of the leading London and Provincial entertainment houses will be issuing their annual reports and accounts very shortly, and we hear

Finance—continued.

that the results, generally speaking; will be quite satisfactory to the shareholders.

* * *

The proposed increased tax on cinemas in France is arousing very strong opposition in that country. It is claimed that the cinema is the only industry which is taxed to the extent of 47% of its receipts. It is now proposed to increase the levy to 67%. This amount appears to be very oppressive, and the authorities will be well advised if they refrain from killing the goose which lays them many golden eggs. The proposals will affect the British investor who has money invested in French companies, or in British concerns holding properties in France, although we do not think the latter class is a large one.

* * *

We should esteem it an especial favour if the Secretaries of Cinema, Theatre and Music Hall companies would be good enough to forward us, week by week, the lowest quotation for their shares, and also their reports and accounts as and when issued.

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EDITOR'S NOTE.—Our Special Correspondent will be happy to answer Financial Queries relative to the world of the film on this page. Communications should be addressed to "FINANCIER," c/o "Movie-Land," 4-6, St. Ann's Chambers, Broadway, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.

Printed by L. BELL & CO., Town Hall Lane, Leicester, for the Proprietors, MOVIE PUBLISHING CO.,
4 St. Ann's Chambers, Broadway, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.

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